

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

ENGLISH NATION.

Saturday, April 6. 1706.

I Am now I hope in an exact Correspondence between the Title and the Subject of this Paper, and reviewing the State of the Nation; and I purpose in the Body of this Work, or in the *MISCELLANEA*, to observe so exact an Alternative, that Trade on one hand, or Publick Affairs on the other, shall all along entertain the Reader; and I hope the Variety may not be Unpleasant,

In my reviewing the Conduct of the Gentlemen of the late Ministry, and of those in their Interest; I brought them to the *Crisis of their Politics*, and the Essays they made in Parliament, to *support their Party*, and make themselves formidable even to the Government, that they might think it too hazardous an Attempt, to turn them out; I have touch'd these things but lightly, and

I refer the more Inquisitive Reader to the several Addresses and Representations of the Lords to the Queen upon these occasions, where these things appear more at large.

And yet I cannot pass this, without one Remark of my own: At the End of the Session of Parliament, in which these things were Transacting, both Houses Ordered their Proceedings to be Printed, laying thereby the matter of Fact plainly before the Nation, that all Men might be truly inform'd of the particulars.

The Commons Printed their Accounts in the usual Letter and Form, as such things were commonly Printed, and the Book was, I think, sold for Half a Crown or thereabout — The Lords printed their Account in a small Letter, a large Page and Paper, and this was sold for 6d. Some People were very

very Witty upon this Article, and said, the Lords were fr'e all the Nation should see theirs, and therefore contriv'd it as small and as cheap as they could; the Commons car'd not how few saw their Part, and therefore left it to the usual Course, which by the bulk made it so dear, few People car'd to go to the Price of it; and the Consequence was plain, thousands of the Lords were sold and *Convey'd all over the Nation*, and the difference of Sale in that of the Commons, the Printers have good Cause to know.

Sir H. . . . M. . . . , the general Pamphleteer of the Party, strove with great Vehemence, and the utmost skill of his usual way, viz. *Words without Argument*; to defend these things, and Publish at large, what he calls the *Case of Ashby and White*; — But when a more particular State of that Case came out in a bound Book, with all the Speeches on both sides, People blush'd for Sir H. . . . , *saying some malicious People say, he has not of late been known to do for himself*; and this poor Gentleman was so Lampoon'd for it, that when he came to stand at the next Election for Parliament, at the University of Oxford, among some others more severe, this Stanza is found in Print upon that Article,

*I sent to each Head,
Bound in Blue and Red,
my Case of Ashby and White a,
But as soon as they'd read it,
I lost all my Credit,
And now they bid me go sh . . . a.*

I must close my Review of these things, with a short Retrospect of the last Attempt of this Party; and tho' my Accounts shall come among the shortest of Abridgments, yet I cannot pass over the Famous Article of *Tacking* — So well known to all this part of the World, and from whence the Party obtain'd a new Name of Distinction, which at first they would have pretended to be fond of; but want of Success, has worn it out of Fashion, and it now sleeps among the crowd of those things, which most of the Party find Reason to be ashamed of.

Sundry Attempts had been made, to introduce a power of breaking in upon the *Dissenters*; the Toleration was an Eye-sore that gave the Party a great deal of Pain,

and their Impatience under it was very great; but finding it fend'd about with *Impregnable Laws*, and no way left to storm it openly, when they found the *Canon and Bombs* of Persecution batt'd, like subtle Engineers, they apply themselves to *Mining, Sapping, Countermining*, and a Hundred Modern Inventions, to *blow up* the Tranquility of this Nation, and restore the Confusions, they formerly found so useful to them.

To this purpose, their *Occasional bills* were Calculated, and the Polish'd out side being only presented to the view of the World, and the Pretence covered by a cry against Hypocrisy, *the hint took so well*, that the Nation had like to have been drawn in, and the Lords had pass'd it, had not the Vanity of Success, put'd the Party up too much, and flush'd them with that Assurance, which made them stand in their own light.

I cannot but observe here, what is observ'd by a greater Head than mine, in the Case of the Reformation; that the Enormities and Extravagancies of the *Romish* Party in England, prepar'd the World for their own Destruction; so the Extravagancies of these Gentlemen prepar'd the Nation to Supplant them; for their refusing such reasonable Amendments as their Lordships had made, open'd the Eyes of not their Lordships only, but of the Government also, to see that they aim'd at something more than they discovered, and had a Design concealed, quite different from that which they pretended.

This struck all their Project on the head, and from this time, even the Court it self appeared against their Bill, and they could never obtain it to be Read a second time again in the House of Lords.

And now came on the Project, of Tacking this Bill to the Land-Tax; and here, had the Party had the least Contemplation or foresight of their own Misfortune, they would never have made so Dark, so Extravagant, and Unaccountable an Attempt, which they must needs have known, would never have Succeeded, and in the failing of which, had they not had a Design yet undiscover'd, they had never got on with; of which I shall say something more in the N E X T.

MISCELLANEA.

I Entred in my last, upon the Subject of the Dissenting Ministers in the Country, being Charged in the Assessments of the Land-Tax, with their 4 s. per Pound upon their Stipends or Sallaries as Ministers — The Gentlemen will Pardon me, when I presume to blame their Discretion for paying this Tax, there being no manner of pretence in the least, grounded upon the Law it self, why they should be Taxed; and I cannot but recommend it to them, to desire the Commissioners or Assessors to shew them the Clause, from whence they pretend to Claim such a Power.

Points of Law, and Construction of Clauses are not to be determined here; but in this Case 'tis so plain, that it was not in the Intent and Meaning of the Act, that really it is not in the Letter; and I confess my self somewhat Impatient, in expecting an Answer to the fair Challenge in my last, to the Gentlemen of the other side, to show us from what in the Act, they pretend to Assess the Ministers of any sort, as to their Stipends.

If any of these Gentlemen have Lands or Tenements, Personal Estate and Stock; find it, Gentlemen, and Tax it and welcome; I doubt you will not find them abound much that way, a certain Token they do not tend the Flock so much for the Fleece, as some People pretend; but to Tax them, and levy Money upon them without Law, and where the Law visibly leaves them out, has a great many Unhappy Constructions in it, which I could improve very much to the Disadvantage of the Persons concern'd.

But, to omit Reflections, it is a certain Test of the good will of the Gentlemen, and what they would be willing to do, were

they not under the restraint of Laws, and proscrib'd by a Limitation of Authority, which they durst not resist.

It is therefore certainly the Duty of every Man thus Oppress'd, not to submit to the Imposition of Arbitrary Men, but as the Law directs, to oppose their Violence, insist upon the Merits of the Case, and Appeal to Justice; and as I promis'd to back this Prescription, with a Useful and Diverting Example, it is as follows;

A certain Collector, in a certain Country, not a Hundred Miles from London, and not quite so far from the Country of . . . , came to a Dissenting Minister to demand . . . being so much Charg'd upon him, in his Roll or Assessment, by the Assessors of the Land-Tax, which Roll is Sign'd by the Commissioners or some of them.

The Minister, who had before Complain'd to the Commissioners, but could obtain no Redress, and had been with an Able Counsel at Law for Advice, told the Collector, he was Inform'd it was not his Duty to pay it, and that the Act of Parliament no where made him Chargeable with it, and that therefore he was not willing to pay it; the Collector goes back to his Principals, and receives a Warrant from the Justices of the Peace, to Distrain upon the Minister's Goods, which accordingly was done, and some more than common Violence, as Unjustifiable as the Test, put in Practice at the Seizure.

The Minister patiently suffer'd their Violences of all sorts, without any Opposition; and following the Instructions of his Lawyer, brings his Action at Law against all the Parties, as well the Justices who Sign'd the Warrant, as the Commissioners; and I think, the Assessors and Collectors.

The beginning of the Process, was Entertain'd